it must be in the attempt of understanding someone

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it must be in the attempt of understanding someone

by orphan_account

Summary

"Can the greatest romance of your life last only one night?"

In the summer of 1994 while on a train, a single conversation sparks a connection between Hannibal and Will, even just for a day. They search for answers in between conversations, as they stroll through the streets of Florence.

Based off from Richard Linklater's first film "Before Sunrise" of the Before trilogy

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

A rewrite of the last fanfic I posted because I felt like it was too rushed lmao

June 12, 1994
Salzburg, Austria

The summer was unbearable, with the heat like fire poking on the skin. The air in the carriage was thick and close, as if they were enclosed in a box. If it weren't for this couple, who'd been arguing beside him without end, the heat could have lowered a little. Even just a little.

He, at twenty-seven years old, never had time for things like love. Had never loved, nor dared to try. Not once had he even been tempted. Nobody approached him, nor did he approach anybody. It is a cruel joke for life, a personal victory for himself, however. The little world he knows of for this moment, consisted of this tiny pocket book he's been reading for hours. Front, center and back, then again. The same page. The same words. No matter how much he read, he can never seem to grasp the entirety of this book. It's as if the words were a jigsaw puzzle, scattering it's pieces inside the circuit of his brain.

Threading a hand through his slightly slicked back blonde-brown hair, he sighed, his eyes flickering up when the woman (from the same couple) had seemingly enough of her husband, harshly grabbing the newspaper he's been reading, and slamming it on the windowsill of the train, near their seats. He watched as the woman turned around, her features in the bright mid-morning sun looked like a hapless child's.

It shouldn't bother him. Romance will wither in time like theirs. Standing up, he closes his book, taking his satchel bag. Walking at the back of the carriage he is in, he finally finds a spot on the right, and sits there. He wants his book to be finished uninterrupted. His amber eyes stared at a younger man beside him across his seat, who was also reading. He has this chocolate curly hair, a strong jaw with a growing stubble and beard, and bright, cerulean eyes, in comparison to the Mediterranean Sea. Or any other ocean, to be exact. Before the man could catch up to him, he pried away, going back to his book. It seemed as if the man would never catch onto him, but he eventually did. He looked away, pretending to read, in which the man did the same.

An interruption from the arguing couple however almost made him jump onto his feet, when the woman seemingly had enough, walking away to the back of the train carriage, then to another, while her husband followed, wanting to explain himself. At least, that's how it was in his eyes.

Then again; cerulean eyes and amber eyes met. He was the first to give a reaction, a simple shrug, before he leaned back on his seat, nose buried in the book. But this time, there was no silence to ever come between them.

The man beside him had stopped reading, and tilted his head, looking at him with curiosity.

"So, are you?" He finally asked, putting the book down by the windowsill.

"Excuse me?"

"In love." The man clarified, before he looked away. Simply shaking his head, his answer was as curt as his whole life now. "No. Never thought of it, ever. To me, love will become like the autumn leaves that will be carried away. Like that couple, they are just two leaves of that same tree trying to float on the river when they fell." The young man scrunches his face, seemingly accepting the answer, as well as confused by it. "Same with me. It's tasteless." He tells him, mumbling due to the tone. He asks while fixing his blonde-brown hair, "Do you have trouble with taste?"

"My thoughts are not often tasty." The young man replied, scratching his curly, brunette hair. His hand slowly slides down towards the chair, picking up any lint. "Couples, like the one arguing earlier- they must have had a shitty relationship. Like naive, younger selves maybe back in the spring or summer of '72 or something, you know?" He continues, shrugging as the idea sticks to his head. Who knows right? "They uh, they thought relationships are this kind of fairytale dream, you meet Prince Charming, and live happily ever after, true love's kiss- yadda yadda yadda..."

He wasn't the social type, really. Like really, he'd rather be talking like this, to this random stranger, and then live life like how it is. He doesn't see the point in trying to make friends. His life is already perfect the way it is. The young man watches the scenery go by, wondering where the older man beside him was going. Which was weird, by all accounts. Curiosity killed him like the cat, as the saying goes. His mind travels back to his childhood, and his mother's doting words.

"I want my boy to have a bright future. To do something with his life. I want him to be somebody." Could he be that somebody now? Even on this very train?

The older man cuts him off from those thoughts, before asking, "Would you like to take this to the lounge car?" He offered, amber eyes sparking curiosity too. They were the same; both had sparked an interest in one another.

It doesn't seem bad to say no. It'd be rude to say no.

And he also doesn't want to be alone in a room for the duration of the trip, either. For now, at least. "Sure," he says, in a light tone. So they moved to the back, in the lounge car. Tables covered in white cloth, the same black train seats, and on top of the table were the tissues, salt and pepper shakers.

"How do you speak such good English?" The younger man asked as they walked inside. The older man replied, "I practiced. Then I took a couple of English classes in Paris- is this

okay?" Plus for a short interruption to confirm their seats. In agreement, a simple reply from the younger man was "Yeah, sure." Then he continued, "And I went for a summer class in London." With his answer complete, hands clasped together, the older man asked the younger one, "How do you speak such good English?"

"Me? I'm American." He simply answered, and the expression on the older man's face curved into a half smile. "You're American? Are you sure?" He pressed on, as a joke. "Yeah? I mean, I live in the midwest. In New England." The younger man answers, a crease forming on his eyebrows. With this, the older man bluntly says, "You don't sound like you're from the midwest."

"That's 'cause I just moved there. I'm originally from the south. From uh, Louisiana." Another shrug from the younger man as he responds. "I miss it, don't kinda miss it. It's where I was born, but sometimes it's sort of like a home that's never in my heart. Yet we southerners get played to say "bless your heart" when mentioned." Ah, no. That didn't *seem* to be the answer the older man wanted to hear. It only took a few moments before he realized. "Ouch. So that's how it is, huh? I'm the dumb, crude, vulgar American who doesn't have any culture and can't speak any other language, but, tell you what? I tried." The younger man replied sarcastically, cerulean eyes focused on the older man's face before prying away again in avoidance. "Tell me about yourself." The older man says, sitting down across from the younger man, ignoring that last bit. The man looks at the menu on the table. Then to the older one.

"Or maybe why are you here? You hopped on the train from the station at Munich." He says, as the young one of the two stared at him, just for a minute. Then he says, "I don't know actually. I've been traveling for like two or three days now, on foot around Munich. Then got tired of it, hopped onto this train."

"Has that been good for you?"

"Uhm, yeah. It pretty sucked."

The bit of that answer from the young man made the older man laugh for a moment. Not a loud one however, just a chuckle. A smile. It would have been easy to get caught up in his eyes, his smile. He wasn't though, it was easy not to. "And doing these travels, made me think of things. Random thoughts." The young man continues, making the older interested. "Go on?" He coaxed. The young man took a moment, eyes flickering past the older man, before he continued, "So think of a show. A show that spans for 24 hours. And it shows a man- a handsome man, you know, eating breakfast, making coffee, taking the long shower, reading the newspaper-"

A hand from the older man stops him, as if almost in disbelief interest. "Wait. All of those mundane things that everyone does in their life? Like a poem of day to day life?" Well, it's an almost close answer. "Yeah, though I was gonna say it's 24 hours; boring hours, that everybody does in their fucking lives." The younger man admitted, his lips carving into a genuine smile for the first time in days.

"So you're bored, then." The older man accused lightly. This felt fleeting. Sort of, fleeting. Why was it that talking to a random stranger felt more comforting than anything in the world? Flawed as it may be, it still felt like home.

"Yeah. I mean, it's pretty great. You're pretty great too."

"I'm pretty great because you're great that you're bored?" Again, the older man had accused, the tone of his accented English coming out as a tease. Perfectly flawed, maybe beautiful. Flawed yet beautiful. It was more real, and it'll be the realest that life can be. Because it was fleeting. "Yeah, but-" The young man began, before he was cut off again. By himself now. "Okay, that kinda didn't make sense, didn't it?"

Briefly, the older man leaned back, finding nothing to stare at interestingly but to the younger man in front of him. "It did. And have you been this kind of person? Has life ever bored you every day, since then? Before today?" It was a serious, genuine question. He could have answered that sarcastically, yet the younger man was unable to find any sarcasm to throw.

"No. No, it hasn't. I've always tried to keep it interesting, you know? I mean, for myself, for others. But sometimes- boring is...good." The young man admitted, proud of his opinion to be said and shared. "Interesting. A poetry of boring life, is what you said." The older man said, with just the barest hint of a smile. "It is. It is." The younger man agreed, then continuing to explain his defense of such a boring life. "And you know why I said boring is good?"

"Because it's not exciting?" The older man guessed, a very slight quirk of a brow. Wrong answer, the younger man thought. "Because everything, even the tiniest mundane details of things you've never known will fascinate you." The younger man said, grinning like a child in his victor. "Will the human mind apply to that?" The older man asks, and the younger man nods in return. "Yeah, exactly! Or the science of coffee, and that's why it's good to consume it."

"But you're not bored now. You're not, right?"

"Nope. I mean, I'm talking to someone right now."

If the world could be consumed by the sun now, he would have let it. This strange, interesting young man indirectly referenced his *interest in talking to him*. He just hoped that interest would not become a cold, dwarf star. Furrowing his eyebrows, scratching his palm, the younger man asked, "What's your name, by the way? And uh, where are you headed to?" The older man, not willing to give away anything about himself, simply answered, "Hannibal Lecter. And I'm headed back to Paris. I'll get off at the station in Rome to be able to take the train that is routed there, as the stations in Salzburg don't have any available trains that are straight towards France."

Not just the answer, but the name too. That interested him, much as he hated to admit. "Wait. Hannibal? As in the Carthaginian general who swept Rome under his feet during the Second Punic War?" The younger mused. "That's your name?" Hannibal leans back, crossing his arms. "I was named after him, after all. My father wanted his firstborn son a strong name; they picked Hannibal to be my name."

"So, a Carthaginian name. From Carthage. That's in what, now? Tunisia?"

"Yes. Why? Do you know something about me?" Hannibal asks, intrigued. The younger man shakes his head. "No, not really. Unless there is? I just thought it's interesting. That's like...a

name used by a historical figure, and...yeah." A pregnant pause turned into awkward silence. He extends his hand, voice wavering due to the earlier statement. Obviously, he was embarrassed. "My uh, my name is Will. Will Graham." The younger man introduced. "It's nice to meet you."

Hannibal smiles, a real smile, and shakes his hand. Now that they know each other's names, their conversation can proceed to become more casual, albeit the banter goes on to add flare. "So, you're heading back to Paris?" Will asked, his lips dry so he licks them. "Are you working, or-"

"I'm a medical student. Graduating in two weeks." Hannibal replies, tracing the intricate, unreadable words of the menu they were given. "I'm also a TA for a professor; anatomy. And tutoring other students. So, as you can tell, I'm a very busy man."

Those alone were an achievement for Will, much less he thought about. "Geez, and you don't get stressed?" He needed to know the answer to that. "Stressed?" Hannibal repeats, the sound rich and deep. "As far as I'm concerned, any other day?" Questioning to himself, before confirming, "It's in any other day." Will didn't get the chance to answer, as he got bombed by the same question. "And you are a student as well?" Of course, he'd get bombed by that question.

Admitting his defeat in Hannibal's presence, Will made a raise of hands. "No. I'm a fresh graduate from the police academy, and now I'm working at homicide."

"I see. I do see. And you are...?" Hannibal expectantly had Will to elaborate about the details of his career. Should he even tell? To a complete stranger such as him? As if Hannibal would understand. "Stabbed. I got stabbed on my shoulder just five months ago. That's why my right shoulder is a pain in the ass right now." For a honest to God moment, Will admitted that information to satiate the knowlege Hannibal wanted to know. Disdain? Nothing to be seen from Hannibal. Surprise, however- yes. He would've expected this man to show that much surprise. Hannibal could have been knee-deep upon hearing it, as he remarked, "That must've been awful. However, is there any lingering pain in your shoulder still?" There is. But Will wasn't about to let some stranger drown in bloody concern for him. "No." He denied, the words coming out sounding clipped.

Hannibal lifts an eyebrow, tilting his head. Did he know that he was lying? Yes. Would he admit it? No. "Is it? I don't want to pry, but your expression divers from your words." Hannibal rebuked, his voice quiet and polite. Will bluntly shook his head, his curls moving along like a fluffy cloud. "I'm fine. And yes, it's still a pain in the ass. But I'm managing." He did what he could in this world, managing. Will managed each detail in his life. Most of the time, he is alone in his thoughts, stone cold from any other human interaction, set aside small talks from co-workers back in the police station at home. He can't have someone prying into his personal business. Into his head, soon enough. He won't allow it. And this man, this stranger, was prying. Yet Will hasn't pushed Hannibal away; talking for hours on end ever since they reached Salzburg. God forbid he made conversation with a complete stranger.

Chapter 2

If there was something Will had observed about Europe, it's that they are not service oriented. Not that he wanted to be judgemental either, though it's the mere observation yanking inside his brain. And it's not like the United States were service oriented either, not even close. Sometimes?

They did get a good meal however. Hannibal has his medium rare pork steak, while Will gets a filet of trout. During those twenty minutes of eating, the conversation stopped for a while, replaced by a heavier, thick cloud of awkwardness (in Will's point of view), and contentment (in Hannibal's point of view). Like equal fractions though, Will felt a sense of peace, not even knowing why. He felt good, contented. Like a cat on a warm summer's day, curled up in a sunbeam, watching the world go on by. Was it because a complete stranger is here eating with him? Or can Hannibal still be called a stranger at all? They've had conversations, starting from the nonsense of love, to their jobs and education, to the time Will got stabbed on the shoulder.

"What do you think of Mozart?" Hannibal asked, breaking the silence. Will looked up from his meal, swallowing what he ate first hand. "Mozart? Like as in the composer?" He queried.

"Yes, as in the composer."

"I never had the pleasure of listening to him. Or watching him, for that matter. I hear he was quite the musician though." Admitting, Will never really listened much to the compositions of Mozart, Chopin, Bach or anybody else who was associated with the orchestral side of the music industry. "I do listen when it's being blasted on TV, during performances and that." It's not like Hannibal can castigate Will on that.

Everybody has their preferences, no matter how much one or the other can spite differences. That is just the way it is. Fiddling on his seat, Will creased his eyebrows together, and quizzed, "Was that offensive to your perfect, immaculate self?" Hannibal's facial expression remained impassive. He took a bite of his steak and chewed it before answering, "Of everything, I find discourtesy unpleasant."

"Fair enough." Will nodded, swallowing the last traces of food in his mouth. "Rudeness isn't exactly what you'd delight in, the very least somebody like you." He further pressed, then finally becoming quiet, inquisitional on what the older man would answer. "I find rudeness obnoxious, Will. In general." A pause followed, and then, "You were rude to me once. Before Vienna." None other than their earlier banter before their meal, though Will seemed unfazed by this. That's because he knew. He was rude, is rude- yet, doesn't give two shits about it.

Hannibal swallowed his food, his eyes meeting Will's in a direct gaze. Unlike before, their eyes waded into each other. Will, having cerulean eyes, was like the salty ocean clashing to Hannibal's amber eyes, the sun when it comes to set, as if being pulled down by the blue waters. The urge to look away, to look at his food, or anything but the man sitting across from him. Will didn't do it though. He only did when Hannibal was the first to look away, towards

the window. "This is Florence." Hannibal responded, a finger pointing to the outside. "I suppose this is your stop?" Silence enveloped Will, deeply disappointed to see that they were now here. Banter this, banter that, his conversations with Hannibal were engaging; rousing even. With a deep sigh, he replies, "I suppose it is." Plus, he would have loved to tease the older one to no end. Would have loved to see his patience wear thin. That would have been hilarious.

The train stops at its stop in Florence, the conductor announcing the train has arrived. Thirty people or so have Florence as their final stop, and Will is part of that statistic. As Will took his bag, he turned to look at Hannibal, still sitting there, looking outside. He wanted to say something, yet the words never escaped his lips. It's not like he was afraid to talk, he just wasn't sure what to say. Because that usually means he has a crazy idea. He went towards the door, but turned around to look at Hannibal one last time. Was it though? Was he really going to tell Hannibal about this? It's going to be worth a shot though.

Again, Will approached Hannibal, sitting down on the seat. His eyes lit up in wonder. "Will. Are you not getting off?" He questioned the younger man's interest as discreet. "Yeah, I am." Will said, his brows crinkling up, mouth curving. "And *you're* getting off. With me."

"What?" Hannibal didn't expect it to turn around this way. "You heard me. You're getting off with me. I just- there's something. You and I? Like...like a connection." Will explained, but was confused why he'd even said this too. But he did feel a tinge of excitement. Hope. Nervousness. Excitement. He wasn't sure what to make of it, but it did feel good. Like he was moving towards something, in the right direction. "If I can't convince you out of this damn train, let me tell you, it'll haunt me for the rest of my life." Will told him, close to complaining. Hannibal wasn't sure how that made him feel, but he looked away.

He runs two fingers on his hair, then sideyeing Will. "Why would you want me to come with you?" He asks, genuinely buzzing on the thread of intrigue. "Because, we have something in common. We're both..." Will trails off, unable to find the right word in a hot minute. He sighs, and says, "We're both troubled."

"Troubled?" Hannibal says it with an inquisitive eyebrow. "You think that we are both troubled?"

"Yeah." Will agreed, pressing his lips in a thin line together. "Troubled young men, both alone, and both searching for something to grasp through the shithole that is life." Hannibal didn't get the analogy, but he got the sentiment. He could relate to that. He could relate to Will's sentiment. Underneath all of this, he does have a troubled life. A part of him that he's tried his best to drown out in the ocean of his memories. Will was right. Hannibal was searching for something to grasp through the shithole that was life. He hadn't found it, but he hadn't given up searching. Question is: *how did Will know that?*

The answer was simple to guess. It was empathy. Will had empathy. He could feel things, relate to other people and feel what it was like to be troubled, like the likes of Hannibal. He could empathize with anybody, even the most indescribable of people. "I'll have to think about it." Hannibal said, looking away from Will, his eyes resting on the window. Waiting would take up all of their time, and Will needed to convince him out of the train now or else, do God forbid, he'd be regretting he'd ever talked to Hannibal.

Will smiled, but it was more a grimace. "Okay." He said, and looked away from Hannibal as well, looking out the window at the scenery. Then he stands up, ready to give up on the idea. Until Will hears the chair creak, Hannibal now standing, satchel bag around his shoulder. "You got something you want to tell me?" Will asks, fingers rubbing against the fiber cotton of his backpack. And Hannibal replies, an air of sureness accompanying his words, "Yes, as a matter of fact, I do." Will didn't want to look at Hannibal. If he did, he might just feel guilty for even bringing the idea up. The temptation however, was far too great.

At that moment however, Hannibal returned the statement after the abashed silence. "I'll go with you. Off this train." His smile is broad, before he hides it with a clear of his throat. Will almost jumped for joy. He could have almost had, if they weren't inside a train and hit his head. "Oh thank God. I was afraid you were going to say no." However, to counter honesty: Could Hannibal really have said no? It was near to damn impossible, considering they had started a conversation which blossomed into this awkward yet comfortable acquaintanceship.

"It's a deal, then." Will says, as he extended his hand for a handshake, to which Hannibal obliged. The train doors remained open for some time, and as if on cue, they closed the moment both men had gotten off. This is a crazy idea, and for the first time in his life, Will wished his life wasn't so boring. He didn't know what was in store for him, but he was curious. Since it's got Hannibal, well, maybe today can even be the greatest his life has ever been. Unable to stop being giddy, Will swore off his own sorry ass internally. Today was going to be an unforgettable summer experience.

Finally off the train, they walked down the bustling Florentine train station, watching all people of ages, races, and shapes pass by. A man in a black suit, walked by, with a briefcase, and a woman in a sheer dress that bared her midriff, and a bouquet of flowers in her hand. Lovers, perhaps. "And this is why relationships are not for me." Will says to Hannibal as they passed by the couple. "Too much PDA to work with."

"I couldn't agree more." Hannibal says, his eyes fixed on the couple's feet. From feet, to the concrete floor, to the stairs, then to Will. His gaze seemed to follow the younger man alone. Because if he didn't, he'd slip away from him. After all, Hannibal did agree to be spending the day with Will. He had given Will a sense of purpose, some small satisfaction in his otherwise bleak existence, and Will was more than grateful. "So, what have you planned?" Hannibal asked him, taking his satchel off just to be checked by the station guard, then given back to him. In another line, the same was done to Will. "I'm not sure." Will said. "I might end up taking you somewhere though. You might end up somewhere interesting." Not that Will knew, but Hannibal has been here before, in Florence. He's fallen in love with the city years ago, but he's sure if he tells Will, this day would lay in ruins. And he didn't want that. He wanted this day to be perfect.

Will watched the people walking by them, observing them. He always did, trying to read their expressions, trying to guess at their thoughts. It's distracting. And if he's got empathy circulating inside, sometimes, he can know in a single word. But that's not the focus, isn't it? Will turns to Hannibal, and asked, "You okay? I mean doesn't this feel awkward for you?"

"No. I feel fine." Hannibal replied, then mischief adored his face.
"You're not worried about me blabbing your secret identity, are you?"

"Secret iden- what are you talking about?" Will retaliated, laughing lightly, as they both walked. The medical student shrugged his shoulders, responding, "I thought you'd have one. You're rather interesting if you did have." Was he being serious right now? The neutral, strong face was hard to see through. It's like Hannibal has a thick window on his skull.

"I don't have a secret identity."

"You do too. Your alter ego is the world's most boring man." Hannibal answered. Pausing on his tracks, Will frowns before saying, "Do me a favor, and stop." Because to Hannibal, Will might just be the most interesting man in his eyes.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

> If you're wondering as to why Will seems a bit hyper in this fic, it's because of my headcanon that he doesn't have much of a shitty life than what other fic writers do. Like, he has a relatively normal life, though it is starting to diminish due to his empathy.
>
> As for Hannibal, everything that happened in his past still happened, though his younger self here isn't of a good guy, he's not a killer (yet). I hope this clears up any questions/clarifications you guys may have wanted to ask! Also, happy happy new year! ♡♡♡

A lot of pigeons were flying right now, their feathers casting overhead in the Florentine mid-morning sky. They have already passed through the Piazza della Signoria, a large square in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, where the two men stood. Perched on the Palazzo's roof were not pigeons, but crows. With their big black feathers, they flew out into the sky, accompanying the flock of pigeons.

The crows looked like they were having a conversation with the pigeons, which was hilarious to think of. "They're smart birds." Hannibal commented, as he looked up to the flying birds up there in the blue sky. "The crows, I mean." With his hands in his pockets, he makes a little noise, stifled. "I wouldn't know, I'm not a birder." Will said. "I would have thought you'd be one." Hannibal threw back, enjoying this little banter they have. It's shitty, yes, but it's better than nothing. They sat down on a fountain by the Piazza della Signoria, the water trickling behind them with its twinkling sound.

The city square still has a lot of people, but not like earlier when they both got off the train. Will soon took out a brochure which contains all tourist attractions in Florence. He starts saying, "I think we should find some place to kill time. A museum, or a movie theater, or um...an art gallery?" Well, it's not like Hannibal can go against that. They passed by narrow streets, taking note of the cultural architecture. Their conversation however, was far-fetched, with Will breaking the silence for their sakes, and rather would trade to hear their own voices exchanging dialogues to one another. The silence between them was tense. "Remember that couple earlier in the train? Did you know what they were arguing about?" He asks.

"No, I didn't." Hannibal replied, his hand caressing an old house wall. "I couldn't understand them. My German isn't that able." That makes sense. "Well, I couldn't understand them either, but it seemed like they got really heated over some trivial thing." Will explains. Hannibal's eyes shined, an answer ready at play.

"Have you heard that as couples grow older, they lose the ability to communicate and understand?" He asks Will, as they go on with their slow walk. "Couples like the ones in the

train, as they get older, they lose the ability to speak. They lose the ability to listen. They lose the ability to know what the other one is feeling, Will." Hannibal explained, staring at Will, stopping from their walk. "The trust is gone?" Will suggested, indirectly answering the reason why that couple argued even for trivial things. Hannibal is quiet for a moment, and then he asks, "Do you think, Will, that we lose the ability to understand each other with time?"

If that is the case for a couple, what else for friends and family? Debating within himself about the answer, Will hums, focused on what he should say. Replying, "I think it's on the person's perspective of how they see this for their life."

"Maybe for you, but not for me, and now the couple fights again, because they refuse to see both sides of the ends." Hannibal jokes, and they laugh. Will's laughter filled half of the street they were walking at, before he stifled it. "Fuck, sorry. I just didn't think I'd have somebody to laugh about love with. I mean, I usually admit I'm a pessimist about it, but...eh." He says, then acquaints his words with a shrug.

That's not the case for Hannibal, however. The very least, he didn't believe in Will having pessimism. "You're not a pessimist about love, you're a realist, Will. You know the pros and cons of love, romantic or platonic." He tells the younger man, slipping his hands in his pant pockets. "Some people see love, those who are on the romantic side, as this incredible force of nature. As something that will transcend all that you're used to, and break down all the barriers in place. Your intellect, your morality, your sense of right and wrong. As much as it applies to most romance, it works on platonic ones too."

Pausing to contemplate on what to say, he continues. "Love is blind, that's what they say. Some people see it as this amazing feeling of being connected to the other person, something that they can't explain or define, but it's indescribably powerful, in a way. Others, like me however, see love as the worst thing they've ever experienced. I see it as this thing that will break you, and make you completely reliant on the person you're with." Hannibal explained, a somewhat exodus of his statement on love.

The pair continue walking down the road, pausing to take in the city's sights, while Will thinks about what Hannibal just said. Is he right? Does love break you down, in a way? Wouldn't it just depend on the person? Or it may mean Hannibal is the pessimistic one here. Will ponders on the matter, before shaking his head and deciding to leave the questioning for now. They passed by the Piazza della Signoria again, but this time towards the direction of the Ponte Vecchio, and the Uffizi Gallery. "I think we should go there, Will, after lunch." Hannibal suggests the gallery, in a hushed manner.

Some silence here and there, and then: "You know, I've heard Florence is a place where they have a certain type of…art." Will blurts out, putting emphasis, as they continue walking. Hannibal turned around with his face all scrunched up, just as Will defended himself with a look. "I ain't takin' things out of context." He mumbled, then walked past the older man.

"I don't know, Will. I think you're taking things out of context." Hannibal says, with a bit of a laugh, following the younger man.

"No, I'm not."

"Yes, you are."

"Is not."

"Is too."

"Is not."

"Is too."

"Fuck, stop it." Will groaned, raising his arms up then slumping them down. Walking away, Hannibal chuckles as he looks at the poor man, then tilts his head to signal Will to keep up. The younger man obliges, as Hannibal takes the lead once more. "I think I should make you angry often. Your southern accent comes out when you're mad." Hannibal says, making Will turn his head towards him. Hannibal's a few steps ahead, looking back to Will with a small smile. "I'm serious. I really do. I think it's one of the few things I'm interested in." He says, sounding sincere. On cue, Will blinks, before he spots a small tram that can take them around the city without having to tire their feet. "Let's take that." He says, this time leading Hannibal.

"Fine." Hannibal replies, with a shrug. He follows Will onto the tram, as the driver closes the doors. They sit together, side by side. The city of Florence is luminous in the near afternoon light, especially the water of the lake that reflects the sun, giving life to the otherwise pale buildings. Will watches the buildings go by quickly, as the tram continues on its route.

"I know we've been talking for a while now. But let's have a few more Q&As for now, okay?" Will suggested with his eyebrow raising up. "I'm curious to see how far we can take this, you know?"

"Absolutely." Hannibal agrees, before Will smiled mischievously. "Okay...so, I ask first. Tell me: What pisses you off? Aside from rudeness, of course, cause I know that's your number one." This will be interesting, considering Will asked first. He could have asked Hannibal anything. All sorts of things could have been discussed. But Will chose this topic. Interesting. Hannibal lets out a small laugh. "That's a loaded question, Will."

"Just answer it, Hannibal. What pisses you off and don't say rudeness." Ironic to hear as Will said it was close to being rude. Not that Hannibal found a problem, however.
"Inconsistency, primarily. Bias, in all that one does. You choose to show a certain side of things, and then choose not to show other things. That gets me on my nerves." He answers after a moment.

"That's a bit of an extreme response. Is there a more...civil way of saying that?" Will asks, raising his hands defensively. Hannibal looks at him, a tiny bit upset. "No, I'm just...trying to understand you. That's all." Will explains, as he puts his hands back in his pockets. "Sorry about that. Anyways, you ask me something then." He says, curious to what Hannibal would even ask him.

"Alright, Will. Easy question." Hannibal says, easing the awkwardness. "Do you believe in something?"

"In what?" Will replies, very perplexed. Hannibal blinks in time of his words. "In something. Do you believe in something?" He repeats, expecting the answer to come quickly. "Oh, I see. You're talking about God. Yes, I believe in something." Will realizes, then shrugs blandly. "I'm not super religious though." He continues, tapping the window lightly, then having one arm stretch on their seats. Hannibal twitches his eyebrow, a small nod to the answer.

"I see. Well, I believe in something, too. It keeps me strong, keeps me from doing horrible things. It keeps me sane." Hannibal replied, a glint in his amber eyes. "Your turn, Will. Ask me again." He then challenged the younger man, a close to grin smile on his face. "If you believe in something, why do you act like it doesn't exist?" Hannibal's eyes widen a bit, before he quickly composes himself. "I don't know what you mean." That side of him; Will can't know. Not yet, at least. He'll have to keep that little secret to himself for now.

As if playing charades, they were stuck in that position, due to a single pause and shock on Hannibal's part on the question. "I mean exactly what I said. You act like there's no God, no morals, no...no something." Will says, biting his cheek figuratively as the words come out. Again, it was due to the fact Will could read body languages too.

He could see the wheels turning in Hannibal's mind, trying to find a way to answer without giving anything away. "Merely because I don't believe in it." Hannibal pressed on, where Will just gives up on trying to get the real answers out. "Okay then. What is a problem for you?" He asks the older man. Hannibal, finding it in himself to turn the tide, blunty tells Will this. "Probably *you*. You are the problem." He says, before falling silent. Will smiles a bit.

"I thought so." Will whispers to himself rather than to Hannibal, before they sit in silence again. For the first time today, silence enveloped them for the longest time. Where Hannibal looks, Will does. Where Will looks, Hannibal looks in his direction.

They exited the tram at the Piazza della Repubblica, taking in the sights and smells of the Italian city. They wandered around the old city center, marveling at the architecture. Hannibal touches a building's exterior, feeling the rough edges of the cut stone. Meanwhile, Will approaches two men, for suggestions on where to go first. "Oh, but museums aren't a lot of fun these days." One of the guys said, a hand on his balding head. "Supposedly there's a new one, but I doubt anybody would even go there. Plus, they're all closed for now, they will open again all by two o'clock in the afternoon." He said, then waved at Will, before gesturing for them to go. "Thanks." Will said, and they walked off. Hannibal shakes his head as they walk, not taking his eyes off the city. It's sort of disappointing having to wait for hours until a museum opens. It makes sense, however. There are a lot of people, so they try to open in a time slot where most won't even bother to go.

After a while, the two walk again around the city, where Hannibal sees a music store. There are a lot of old records inside, posters of some big stars of the fifties, sixties and seventies. A young man with a thick black beard and a tattoo on his neck is sweeping the store's floor.

"Excuse me." He says, holding his hand out. The man looks at Hannibal, who points at the music store. "Is this open?" He questions, hoping that it was. It's been two hours now after he and Will got off the train, yet this was the place they managed to actually go. If it wasn't open, that was a real bummer. "Yeah, it's open." The man answers, with a smile. "Great!" Will praises, genuinely happy to have somewhere to finally go, even if it's just a music store.

"Let's go in." He taps Hannibal's shoulder, as he goes inside. The medical student chuckles, shaking his head, amused.

They walked into the store, where the owner greeted them. He told them that he'd be closing in five minutes, but he could stay for another five if they wanted to search for the records they wanted to listen to. They did stay, searching through the old records of singers from around the world. On his hand, Hannibal holds a record of Frank Sinatra songs. He flips through it, smiling as if he knew what it was, when in reality, he doesn't. He knows that it's something that Will loves, though. Probably.

Will does love Frank Sinatra's songs. His parents have many old records of every album the famed star has. But like everybody else, he has a favorite. "You wanna give it a try at the listening booth?" Will asks Hannibal, pointing towards a small room by the left side of the store. "Of course." Hannibal said, walking past the owner and towards the booth, then shutting the door behind him and Will once they were inside. Taking out the big, black vinyl record, and he puts it on the player, as a sweet melody starts.

There will be many other nights like this

And I'll be standing here with someone new

Both Hannibal and Will stand there side by side, listening to the song. It was a cover by Sinatra, but it was the best version for Will. Their eyes met for a brief moment, before turning away from each other, silent emotions within their range.

There will be other songs to sing

Another fall, another spring

Up until now, this song was just nothing but pleasing to hear for Will. Then he swore that listening to this song made him feel weird. A good kind of weird. He wanted to do the same as Hannibal, and let the music take him away.

But there will never be another you

Hannibal closes his eyes as he listens to the song, the sun's rays from the listening booth shining and making him almost ethereal by look. Unable to resist, Will turns around, subtly staring at the older man. There was a moment, about half a second, where Will's eyes locked with Hannibal's, before they separated. Will's eyes were full of questions, but he didn't ask any. Nor did Hannibal. The two young men just stood there, the music carrying its smooth, silky jazz tune. If they were to talk, their eyes did all of the talking.

There will be other lips that I may kiss

But they won't thrill me like yours used to do

Yes, I may dream a million dreams

But how can they come true?

If only in reality, this kind of longing for love could be taken seriously. A love where nobody else could be on par with the one who has truly taken a special place in one's heart, has enraptured their soul. It would be nice, Will had to admit, to love somebody.

As the song comes to a slow close, Will has his head turn to Hannibal, though the other man wasn't looking. Perhaps, Hannibal was just simply nice to look at. A nice person to be company with. Maybe, that's just.

If there will never ever be another you…

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